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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

17 October 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Fritz W. Ermarth
Chairman

SUBJECT: Ermarth Remarks on Soviet Affairs

Since coming back out to Headquarters, I've turned down most invitations to speak publicly on Gorbachevia, in the view that too many Sovietologists in one building could get us all in real trouble. I have had some off-the-record opportunities, however, for example the Defense Policy Board that Harry Rowen mentioned to you and a seminar at the Council On Foreign Relations run by Greg Treverton, 19 September. The attached notes convey the general line I'd been taking prior to the October Plenum. I think you will find it a useful and reinforcing counterpoint to your public remarks.

To judge from the carping of an unidentified "administration official" in Saturday's NYT (probably Roz), you have not heard the end of the complaining. The charge from that kind of critic that you are out to undermine the new US-Soviet amity by "writing Gorbachev" off is not particularly hurtful. I think you can expect some soto voce complaining from "good guys" in Moscow that your line is threatening to liberalization in the USSR (actually the contrary is true and can be forcefully argued). What may be most awkward to deal with is the charge that your line (and mine too) does not represent the majority view of CIA's more expert and studious Sovietologists. I think the right response is that your speeches are based fully on the detailed analysis by specialists on what is really happening in politics, economics, foreign policy, etc.; not on what people wish the outcome to be.

Fritz W. Ermarth

Attachment:
As stated

Fritz - each of my versions has been reviewed by Mac Easter. I believe they represent the overall general view.

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